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ABSTRACT

This report on a seminar on mass media education which was held in 1986 for teachers in European elementary schools includes an introductory statement by the Seminar Director; summaries of four lectures; reports of three working groups; a concluding statement; and a list of participants. The five formal presentations were as follows: (1) "Mass Media Education for the 5-12 Year Olds: Why?" (Evelyne Bevort); (2) "The Contribution of the Press to Mass Media Education at Primary School" (Constant Vautravers); (3) "The Contribution of the Press to Mass Media Education at Primary School" (Alain Howiller); (4) "Mass Media Education: Online Syllabus for 6 to 12 Year Olds" (Jean-Pierre Golay); and (5) "Mass Media Education in the Schools of Europe" (Pierre Lespine). The three working groups addressed such topics as: the aims of mass media education; teaching activities that can make children aware of the functioning of the media; help provided to educators to date by media professionals; the place of media in education; and mass media education for children 5 to 6 years old and 11 to 12 years old. The concluding statement reviews issues raised by participants and some of their comments and suggestions on these issues. Countries represented in this seminar were Belgium, France, West Germany, Iceland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. (EW)

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33rd Council of Europe teachers' seminar on "Mass media education in primary schools"

Donaueschingen, 6-10 october 1986

Report

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THE CDCC's TEACHER BURSARIES SCHEME

European Teachers' Seminar No. 33

on

"Mass media education in primary schools"

Donaueschingen, Federal Republic of Germany

6 - 10 October 1986

Report by

Ms. Evelyne BEVORT

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et des moyens d'information
Paris

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I. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY THE SEMINAR DIRECTOR

Mass media education for the 5-12 year olds : Why?
by Evelyne BEVORT

Today, more than ever, the school is necessary for bringing some semblance of order to the widely scattered fragments of information disseminated by the all-pervading mass media. Pupils need help if they are to master the processes used by the media and to acquire proper judgement. Children are being saturated by television at an increasingly early age (an enquiry carried out in Japan shows that in 1979, 2-4 year old children were watching television for an average of about 3 hours per day!).

Nowadays, the discovery of radio and television starts before school age and brings the child real, up-to-date knowledge very early in life. The previously existing situation has been turned topsy-turvy: formerly it was the school which taught children how to read - a vital means of acquiring information, most of which was in written form.

Hence, it has become essential to develop the ability in children, at a very early age, to decode photographic or audiovisual images, in order for them to find their way through the labyrinth of information, through reality as manufactured by the media, and through the knowledge dispensed by the media.

At the moment, mass media education plays no important role in the primary school curriculum. Some countries have become aware of its value, and experiments are in progress here and there. But we are still far from reaching a situation where all children of 5-6 and 11-12 are treated in the same way.

Primary schools in a good position

Mass media education, although it covers a vast field and its methods are much debated, is particularly well adapted to the primary school.

Between the ages of 5-6 and 11-12, children are force-fed with images by the media and inundated with countless pieces of information. This is the period when basic learning habits are formed, when discovery can be at its richest and most dynamic. Media education will be more successful if it is given an accompaniment to each of the other subjects in the curriculum.

The very organisation of the class will facilitate such action : all subjects are taught by the same teacher. Mass media education can easily form part of the content and rhythm of the lessons in accordance with the approach that the teacher considers best adapted; it will thus be more flexible and generalised, since the unique position of the teacher ensures that he/she can treat it from widely differing angles.

The teacher can touch on the following:

- what the media are;
- how they are organised;
- what choice they make among the information they transmit; but also
- how they dress up their messages to make them more attractive and more credible;
- how the recipient tends to consider - as gospel truth - a REPRESENTATION of the facts, where actually only a subjective and partial construction is being placed on them.

In order to get the lesson across - and wherever possible in collaboration with professionals from the media themselves - the teacher may make use of television programmes , analyse information disseminated and reveal the art of montage which confers meaning on a radio or video broadcast. Recourse may also be had to the press as regards choice of information, priorities among events and differing treatments accorded.

i. The media make it possible to introduce into the classroom elements of life which are external to it. Thus treatment will be given in school to what has been seen (television), heard (sound radio) or experiences (local happenings) in a family or neighborhood environment. These elements will be supplied by the child. The child will thus have a more dynamic share in classroom life and feel that he/she is being taken more seriously.

ii. The media give children a better knowledge of the environment (physical, human, social, geographical, political, etc.) and enable them to adapt from their earliest youth to the workings of society and begin their apprenticeship in public, social and political life. The "teaching material" thus used creates a new status for children by developing the feeling that they belong to the world: the media can serve as a means of placing them in the centre of everyday life, with their feet firmly on the ground.

iii. They are a mine of information which will serve as a sounding-board for the teacher: they can provide the link between the knowledge imparted through textbooks, or acquired at school, and the dynamism of society, thus ensuring the continuity of scholastic learning.

For children, who are doing badly at school, this pedagogical approach may provide them with a way out of their problems, by allowing them to express themselves on topics with which they are familiar, where the teacher is not necessarily in a position of immediate superiority. By starting work from elements that are closer to the child, it should be easy to work backwards to habitual knowledge or learning processes.

iv. The media are a help towards learning the structuralisation of time (finding out the date, why the seasons occur, looking back to earlier periods in the course of stories, etc.) and some of space (information on the region, the country, other countries, etc.).

v. Newspapers, by using strict criteria for the distribution of articles and illustrations, make it easy to pick out items of interest. They facilitate reading by including stories especially attractive to children - sporting subjects, etc. - and this increases their motives for reading. The papers provide elements for rapid reading by teaching how to "skim over" a page and pick out indications from headlines or the articles themselves.

Oral expression is encouraged by numerous activities: summary of a television serial or of an article; interpretation of a photo or animated cartoon; suggestions for advertisements on radio or television; preparation of an interview, etc.

The child will thus begin to understand the need for clear and well-constructed phrasing, comprehensible to all, and to see the link between oral and written expression. The preparation of a radio broadcast or the breakdown of a television scenario means first of all drafting something in writing. The press also provides an opportunity for studying

word families from different vocabularies, syntax and the construction of stories - subject-matter, link-words, etc.

vi. Mass media education is an encouragement to communication in class (group work, teacher-pupil relations) and to production. It is important that the children should produce information themselves, this will enable them to talk about their own field of investigation, their interests and anxieties, and make it possible for them to use, actively and responsibly, the capabilities they have thus acquired. A child who becomes a producer understands the power of language, the machinery of the media and its effects on their environment. He/she also takes the measure of their own abilities and realises the effort that is needed for the successful accomplishment of a certain activity.

Mass media education at primary school today represents an interesting challenge. But it calls for a clarification of curriculum content for the 5-6 and 11-12 age groups, suitable teaching methods and above all, suitable initial and regular in-service training of the teachers concerned.

II. SUMMARIES OF LECTURES

1. "The contribution of the press to mass media education at primary school", by Constant VAUTRAVERS

It seems abundantly clear, from the experiments conducted over the past ten years or more, that media education extends over the entire span of young people's training - from "nursery school" (ages 4-5) up to University level. But the press makes an immense contribution to the primary school's activities, as I have seen for myself in the Marseilles region, where there is a large mixture of ethnic elements and school failure sometimes reaches alarming proportions.

Before children reach the age of six, the nursery school will have been able to carry out useful preliminary exercises designed to familiarise the child with newspapers as everyday objects. Newspapers can be used as material for games and observation. Children have a confident, almost a family, relationship with the teacher, and when they arrive as newcomers they already have a degree of intellectual baggage drawn from television shows and - to a lesser degree - from listening to radio musical programmes.

For them the newspaper is a discovery. Its pages are looked through. Since it is too big, it is cut into many pieces. One game consists of composing a kind of chessboard on the classroom floor, of jumping on certain parts of a page or alongside it. Then there are folding exercises: paper hats and boats are made, or collages attempted... Later there will be a hunt for coloured pages or pictures; the large-print letters of headlines will be identified and the initials of surnames or forenames cut out.

The picture - whether a photograph, drawing, or advertisement - will be a help towards making verbal descriptions and serving to suggest questions which could be asked of parents.

For the 6-10 year olds, after a transition period, these practices will develop into more detailed examination. Linked with what was shown on television or announced on the radio, the use of a newspaper is an excellent means of taking a subject further through a whole series of exercises and research.

A newspaper is a motivating force. Apart from magazines, a daily paper is generally read in the home. If it is a regional or local paper, so much the better, since it writes of events, places and people whom they may know or have known. Because of this "grass-roots" aspect a local paper "whets the appetite".

As distinct from the local daily life of our town or village, many sections will be found more and more interesting by the pupils, beginning with the sports pages or those dealing with technical or scientific advances. The press is a versatile working instrument. Its use in the various subjects taught is made all the easier in that , at primary school,a class has only one teacher, or at least only one principal teacher. This allows great flexibility for developing media education, both as a subject in its own right and as a follow-up to other school activities, or as a means of opening the pupils' eyes to the realities of the outside world.

Another advantage is that at primary level the relations between teacher and parents are closer. Mass media education - and especially reception of newscasts - helps to strengthen these relations and to induce genuine educational co-operation between parents and teachers, since for both sides the television or radio news provides a "common meeting-place".

A newspaper thus increases motivation because it reflects life, with all its fleeting aspects, surprises and problems. The notion of what is ephemeral should also enter the classroom with the newspaper.

Life oversteps the boundaries of curricula and a child also goes to school in order to become adapted to society itself.

Newspapers make a welcome change from curricular instruction based on manuals that are all too quickly out of date. At the same time, however, they can lead us back to the textbooks for purposes of comparison between past and present.

A valuable working instrument

The press thus makes a substantial contribution, if we agree to base teaching content and method on the practical features of any newspaper. We can, for example, utilise the following:

- weather news and forecasts: observation of temperatures, measurement of their differences, finding countries or cities on the map;

- civil status data: births - breakdown by sexes, choice of forenames; deaths - ages, sexes, forenames. Observation here should be carried on for several days;

- "News in brief" column: recounting the event - where and when did it take place? Who was questioned by the reporter?

- international news : where are the countries situated?

- sports: places in league tables, calculation of points awarded; how did the various sports get their names?

- television programmes: spotting the timetables, working out the duration of broadcasts, differences between newscasts, films etc; programmes preferred by children, favourite heroes;

- illustrations: distinguishing between photos, drawings, graphs; describing a photo, explaining what it means etc.

The press is thus a remarkable teaching instrument, as an aid to reading lessons, observation, analysis, comparison, research and team work, all of which contribute towards the child's integration into society.

The newspaper is also a subject of study in itself.

It can be split into its component parts: pages, columns, space devoted to advertising. This leads towards an understanding of its economic problems. It may be useful to invite a journalist to come to the class, or to show a film or video cassette on the making of a newspaper. A visit by the class to the publishing house itself will serve to complete the picture - the pupils will then see "from the inside" how the paper comes into being.

Collaboration by newspaper professionals is thus a valuable asset. They can also advise pupils who want to start a wall newspaper from press cuttings, or help them to make up the front page of a newspaper, based on agency messages supplied to them, and in some cases make suggestions on the proof-setting and printing of the school magazine.

Training of citizens and consumers

Analysing the press can help pupils, by making comparisons, to become aware of differing attitudes and points of view. They should then become active and informed readers capable of forming their own judgement.

All this calls for a gradual approach, carefully adapted to the age and development of the pupils. The various associations devoted to promoting use of the press in schools, and mass media education, have produced working documents, lists of exercises, and books. Many newspapers publish special pages for schoolchildren, or even specific supplements, or open their columns to letters from young readers.

Factors making for success in this field

i. making use of the press in school is an effective way of ensuring individual and collective progress in class, especially if the process is continued through the entire period of schooling;

ii. to leave no room for criticism, the parents should, if not co-operate, at least be kept informed of the experiments conducted. The newspapers used should represent all shades of opinion: comparison between a number of them will rule out any charge that any aspect of education is one-sided or even politically slanted;

iii. in the primary school, the transition from reading continuous narrative in books to selective reading of articles in the newspaper is found to be an obstacle for the younger pupils. It will be the teacher's task to guide such selection from a plethora of interesting articles; in the early stages, the contribution of pictures and headlines will be a great help to orientation;

iv. the training of teachers in this new work is essential. Inspired improvisation or self-teaching may result in regrettable failures;

v. Working with professional newsmen is always needed. But here too it is not suggested that journalists should take the place of the teacher. They contribute their professional experience and the techniques they use for treating information. They may offer proposals or suggestions in the light of their "outsider" view of the scholastic world. They are educational auxiliaries (often purely honorary), but their role stops there.

2. "The contribution of the press to mass media education at primary school", by Alain HOWILLER

The press is still one of the major vehicles of mass diffusion; it remains a "medium", an intermediary between "reality" and its transmission, between a "distributor of information" and its receiver, between an editor and a reader, between one reader and another reader.

The media thus emerge essentially as communication machines (to use Pierre SCHAEFFER's term). This concept effectively highlights that of an "intermediary" which is the role of an organ of diffusion. However, the machine may impose certain constraints, and the intermediary may lay down limits and suggest or impose particular trends. Some degree of education in the "mass media" is thus indispensable, even vital. But the suspicious connotation too often placed upon such education by teachers should not be allowed to remain. The mass media must not be studied simply because they deserve suspicion on the grounds that the organs of mass diffusion are not "the" reality but only - harking back here to Plato's cavern - a "reflection" of reality. We must beware of studying the media merely to equip the pupils with the means of resisting or even combating them. They must be studied because they are a prolongation of the school, a training for life, a help towards making the individual a fully-fledged member of society, where he needs to be well-armed to ensure his/her very existence and survival. Studies must not be motivated by suspicion but by a desire for knowledge, a critical approach being only one of the basic elements to be inculcated as part of education in the mass media.

The old suspicions harboured by the teaching corps against the use of the written press are outmoded and mass culture is no longer seen as being in opposition to classical culture, just as the notion of the "parallel school", so dear to MacLuhan, is no longer an alternative but a complement to the school proper. In any educational approach to the media, the press has an obvious part to play since it has many trump cards in its hand.

The press as an accompaniment and prolongation of reading lessons

Vocabulary is acquired by reading: the press contributes to this. In contrast to the development of sounds and images, the press can be one of the vehicles of written language: precisely because of the subjects it deals with, it is capable of attracting those who are "put off" or bored by reading - provided, of course, that it makes an effort to retain its attraction (by increasing the number of columns aimed at the young, adding more illustrations - some in colour - and feature articles).

Moreover, the press fixes the fleeting event in a printed document to which reference is easily made and which can be studied in groups.

According to Jacques FAUVET, formerly Editor-in-Chief of "Le Monde", "a wealth of facts provides food for knowledge ... A reader who understands the mechanics for making a newspaper, who knows how to analyse an article and compare various sources, will be more demanding. The school is the first place where this must be learnt". (1)

Many observers think that, in order to understand the audio-visual phenomenon, the written language, ie the press, is a determining factor. Once we learn how to read the papers, we know how to make the necessary effort to understand without falling back on the easy solution of images or sounds. Reading makes its adepts into responsible citizens, exercising their responsibilities to the full.

The child turned producer

The press enables the child, easily and at small cost, to go beyond the stage of consumer or user and become himself/herself a producer: he/she soon turns into an editor, either creating his/her own newspaper or helping to edit the "adults'" journal. The latter task will, moreover, often give him/her more satisfaction than preparing a paper for children, inasmuch as he/she places that task in its social environment, one in which the adult world predominates. For a child, "making" a newspaper, or thinking up a headline is an action highly valuable to his/her self-esteem.

Thanks to the flexibility with which it can be used, the written press is, both for teacher and pupil , an indispensable instrument of instruction and knowledge.

Mass media education will lead to better education by the media, and the quality of today's readers is directly proportional to the quality of yesterday's pupils.

At the Strasbourg seminar on the press at school, R. GERBEX reminded us that learning to read is a basic technique imparted to every schoolchild, whilst learning to read a newspaper is a new and essential discipline.

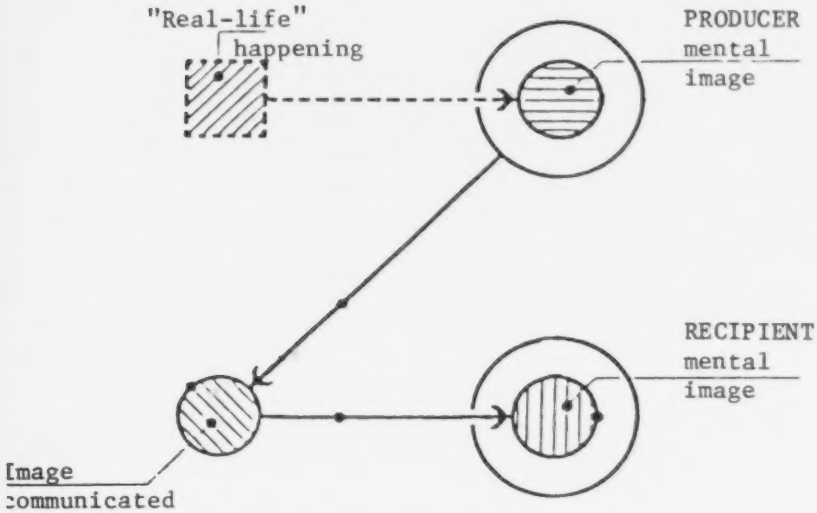
3. "Mass media education: Outline syllabus for 6 to 12 year olds"
by Jean-Pierre GOLAY

The practice of mass media education with 6 to 12 year old children means agreeing to work in a new way: it means, in short, a fresh look at the school. Let us not forget that the school is only one of the elements leading to the integration of the child in society, alongside the family, the churches and other children. Thus children arriving at school as newcomers do not start from scratch so far as education in the media is concerned. During lessons devoted to advertising, for example, it is realised that they have already perceived the basic mechanism of publicity at a practical level, even if their verbal expression of it is lacking.

(1) In "Lire le journal" by Y. Agnès and J M Croissandeau

First and foremost, what exactly is meant by "mass media education"? It includes a whole range of educational practices enabling children to do their own "data processing" on all the communication situations peculiar to the media. Mastery of this technique makes it possible to understand messages conveyed and to profit by them; it also provides them with the means to avoid being manipulated, both in personal life (choice of lifestyles) and in civic life (political options, elections, etc).

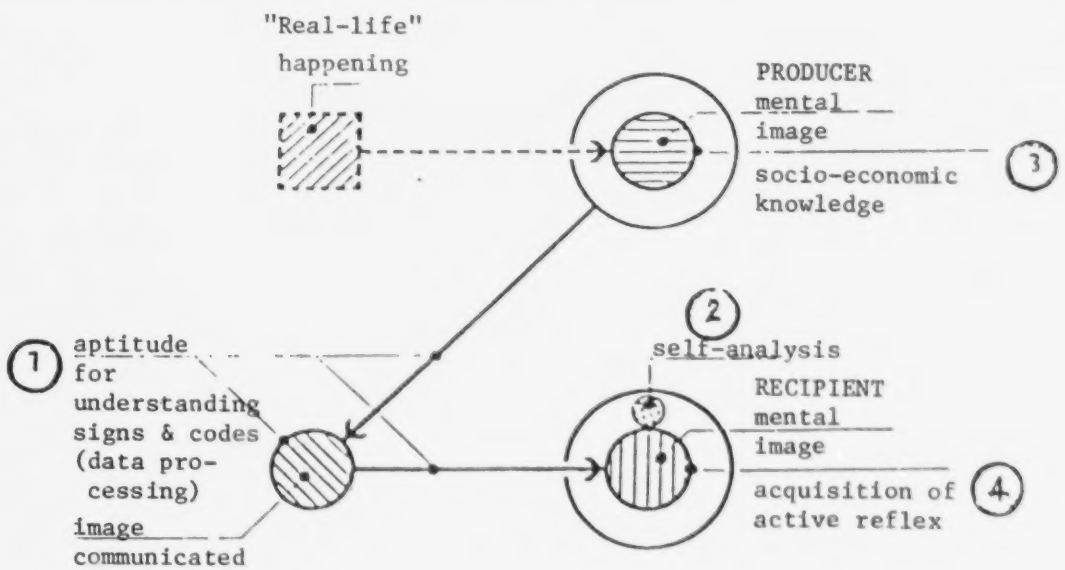
Thus, in a given communication situation between a producer and a recipient:



The producer, if he/she wishes to speak of an element from real life, will do so on the basis of the mental image he/she. He/she communicates with a recipient.

In his/her turn, the recipient will form a mental image of what has been transmitted to him/her.

From the next diagram, it will be noted that 4 aptitudes need to be developed which constitute mass media education:



1. Development and training of aptitudes for perceiving and processing available signs;

2. Self-analysis and growing awareness by the recipient of his/her own motivations;

3. Acquisition of socio-economic knowledge of the media and of various agents involved in the communication process, knowledge of the jargon and instruments of expression;

4. Aptitudes and self-analysis must be completed by the habitual use of them, ie by a change or reinforcement of behaviour.

Too much stress cannot be laid on the two distinct components of media education, namely the aptitude for data-gathering , which is potential rather than effective in certain amenable media-consumers, and the aptitude for data processing, which characterises the independent receiver.

Three examples illustrate points 1, 2,and 3 of the foregoing diagram:

i. Aptitudes for data processing

It is only logical to begin with the acquisition, development and training of percipience: firstly because the aptitudes concerned are prerequisites for dealing with the signs, codes and modes, which are the vectors of the messages that form the fabric of communication, and secondly because these aptitudes are found in children at a very early age and can already be exercised by them.

Wrongly termed "decoding of signs" (as if the recipient were simply going to pick up a message in its previous state by "going into reverse", as it were), activities of this kind are really a form of data processing, a coding of signs with a view to extracting their meaning. To reach this result, a whole series of operations is needed, each calling for the development and training of aptitudes. For example:

a. perception of the signs available at visual or audio level - signs that are either consciously or intuitively introduced, or are available accidentally or for some reason unknown to the author of the message. The perception is selective: certain elements are neglected so that the recipient will see what he/she wants to see. The children must be given the opportunity of seeing everything that is available, while retaining their freedom of choice;

b. commission of these signs to memory and ability to recall them to mind at any moment for confrontation, comparison and "putting two and two together". (This is an activity that requires to be particularly mastered if the message is continuous in the temporal sense : films, television or radio programmes;

c. sorting and placing in order, among available signs, those which are useful and indeed indispensable, by identifying those which correspond to the producer's intention and those which question his/her judgment (this aptitude is still somewhat of a mystery, but it can nevertheless be induced without genuine knowledge of the process);

d. attaching a meaning to these signs and their co-existence. "Background noise" should be treated in a similar fashion;

e. analysing one's own position in regard to the stereotypes that are inevitably present in the message, by contrasting them with those found in other messages, in the light of personal choices or the environment - ie querying their legitimacy and at the same time passing judgment on the usefulness of the work and its author.

Such aptitudes may be developed by regular image-viewing and attentive listening.

"Discovery of images" (and its corollary "Listening activity" for sound radio) are educational programmes introduced in schools for the first 3 years of compulsory schooling. They are used as a background to language activities in the mother tongue, and in drawing and music lessons, on the basis of 1 or 2 15-minute sessions per week. Material for teachers' use comprises notes on instruction methods, series of slides and audio-cassettes.

ii. Motivations and self-anlaysis

Numerous obstacles hamper or distort the functioning of the aptitudes just described. It is widely believed that "passivity" and "intellectual laziness" are responsible for uncontrolled consumption of the media. Admittedly, there are a few cases where a general lack of fitness, or downright fatigue, result in an uncontrolled ingestion of the media, known as passive consumption.

Almost always, however, the phenomenon is more complex and quite different from this alleged passivity. Rather should it be seen in terms of a dynamic, creating an intense, unidirectional field of attraction between media and recipient. It is wrongly confused with an absence of reaction. It is this motive force which the audience-hunters exploit.

Let us take a closer look at the basic mechanisms, which are various and complex, of this force of attraction, in order to achieve a better understanding of the educational activities aimed at controlling it.

Our personality is enlivened, stimulated, or held back, as the case may be, by numerous "motivations", desires or obsessions, whose origin may be genetic, but much more often reflects our personal history or the effect of the socio-cultural background that influences our development.

The attraction of the unknown or mysterious, fear of death, need for other people, obsession with being badly received, the need for feeling superior or the need for belonging to the herd, sexuality, voyeurism, an obsession with monotony, a need for events and action, insecurity and various other addictions - in short, many often contradictory forces tend to attach us to certain messages or visions, with such an intensity that, tempted by dreams or haunted by obsessions, we lose all control over them.

Awareness of these - compulsive - "motor forces" has a two-fold effect:

- first, a reducing effect: awareness makes possible the perception and knowledge of what attracts, fascinates or repels us; it enables us to identify the images or sounds representing our dreams or obsessions and then to understand their seductive or repulsive effect, and, in many cases, to limit their hold on us. The effect of an advertising image, for example, becomes consciously perceived and is relatively controllable. Not only useless purchases, but also, and above all, a subconscious hankering after certain lifestyles are limited in proportion to our capacity for perceiving and recognising them;

- second, an amplifying effect: in other cases (eg surrealism), the identified "motivation" may arouse our voluntary acceptance and we can then confer a richer interpretation on whatever is represented (eg a work by Hieronymus Bosch, a mystical poem, Hindu music, a film, a message that is not "closed").

Hence, just as passive acceptance of the images conjured up by advertisers' dreams can be held in check (reducing effect), so also we may defer the immediate rejection of unusual or disturbing images or music to which it would be in our interest to pay greater attention (amplifying effect).

How can this result be arrived at? First of all, by studying closely the images specifically designed to encourage these needs and obsessions, which are a kind of sensitive, manipulable crystallisation of the images: we will start with the most obvious, such as advertising blurbs and propaganda.

An advertisement image, for example, may be fragmented by tearing the "dream message" away from the product offered for sale: the immediate result is to break the illusory cause and effect relationship, the promise of fulfilment artificially introduced by the advertiser; at the same time, we isolate the dream (or obsession) from its stereotyped representation; for, by reproducing "love's young dream" in a natural setting, dozens and dozens of times, by covering a whole wall with hairy-chested, virile males or sleek-looking managing directors, up to saturation point, not to say ad nauseam, the effect is that of a magnifying glass revealing the existence, in the recipient of the message, of some need, dream or availability stimulated by the images. Provided, of course, that the "sugary" character of the imagery predominates over its "nutritive" value!

Similarly, and depending on the age of the pupils, contacts with pictures by Bosch or Magritte, certain sequences from Pink Floyd records or Tibetan music, or exhibitions of primitive Art, will result in habituating the mind and sensitivity to the coexistence in the ego of dreams and obsessions fundamental in character, whose presence is accepted, whose motive power is perceived and which can be a source of pleasure.

Saturation and nausea on the one side, valorisation and a stimulus to enjoyment on the other: where is the limit, where are the criteria? Clearly, they cannot be imposed on the consumer from the outside: it is for him to define his own limits, not for the teacher to induce them. Knowing that dreams, obsessions and appeals to the subconscious are major pointers to the discovery of surrealist works (and, for "hypercontrolled"

subjects, of numerous hermetically sealed musical systems), the teacher will realise that he/she must abstain from any attempt at repression, on pain of spiriting away a subject's receptivity in regard to an important artistic sector and in regard to more or less marginal human beings. Incidentally, contrary to an educational tradition that dies hard, it should not be disputed that in everyone's personality there exist fantasms, mystical enthusiasms, morbid tastes, heroism, autism, euphoric philanthropy, masochism, erotism. It is curious that all these traits have been tolerated only in "artists" and sedulously decried in the common herd.

iii. Socio-economic knowledge of the media and thorough acquaintance with the jargon each of them may use, together with the effect of the instrument on the producer and his/her message are conditions governing proper appreciation of the productions received.

The "Video Workshop" makes many contributions towards the application of the educational programme.

The most obvious is the acquisition of knowledge of the production process, in particular the instrument used (in this case a television studio), and the kinds of incitement stemming from it, from the camera with its zoom to the producer's trick effects, or an understanding of its powers of illusion, the limits it lays down and the effects of certain styles of shooting (abrupt cuts as compared with soft blending, for example).

Experience of how the instrument works results in demands on the medium concerned, simultaneously with greater aptitude for appreciating professional and commercial achievements.

Another beneficial feature is that the obligation to translate their intentions as communicators into visual and audio signs develops, among children working in the studio, the ability to pay more subtle attention to the signs embodied in a communication - not only deliberate signs, but also those that may have escaped the producer's notice.

The system we have adopted in practice contributes to this end: video recording allows the children an opportunity for remaking their sequences as often as they wish, but as they know that a new version erases the old, they must carefully and immediately weigh up the pros and cons before substituting a new version for the effort just completed. Such an appreciation is forced, intense, collective and hence beneficial. As a further result, they can also obtain without delay, through instant editing, a finished product by the end of the half-day.

Thirdly, in a number of "Video Workshops" at least, (parodies of advertising blurbs, of course, but also fictional scenes about the family, love and affection, for example), the search for means of expression highlights the sensitive points which can be touched on in the target audience, at the same time as the emotional content of certain symbols or images - the outcome being growing awareness of available "motivations".

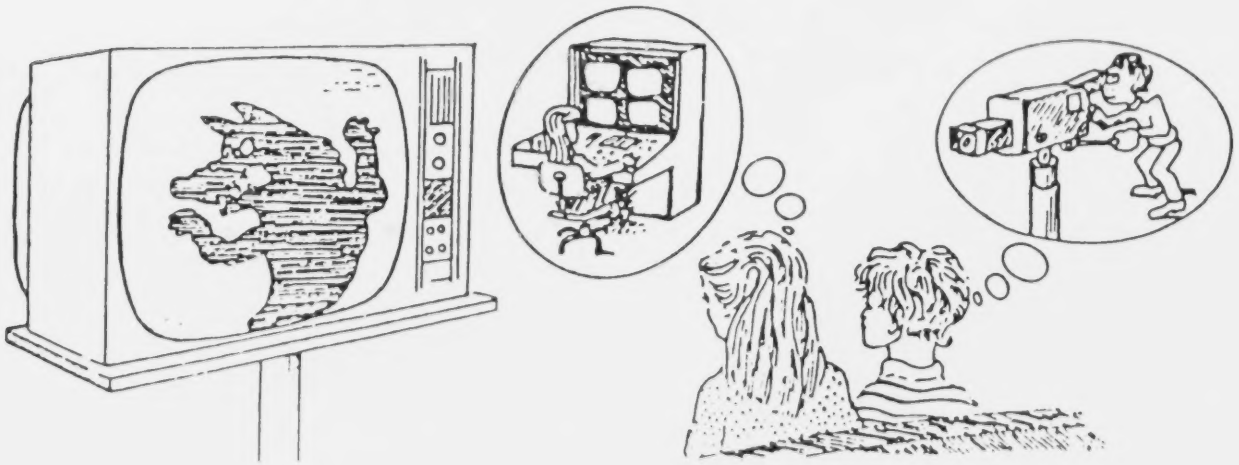
Finally, the "Video Workshop", by its mode of operation, - handing over the production instrument to the children and adolescents, and obliging them, sequence after sequence, to assess the expressive value of the recording with a view to preserving or erasing it - introduces a fourth essential contribution: it forces both sides of the screen to acquire a kind of bipolarisation, for the young producers, whose creative activity places them behind the screen, are at the same time obliged, sequence after sequence, to imagine themselves sitting in front of it in order to judge the expressive effect of the broadcast.

There is considerable evidence that those taking part in the "Video Workshop", when they are spectators of the products offered by the commercial channels, retain this faculty of bipolarisation and have a more active and more acute awareness of the production apparatus and the producer. They have an active reflex which induces greater evaluation, with the aim of either enjoyment or self-protection, sometimes both.

Conclusion

An increase in aptitudes and knowledge, the stimulation of personal experience as a valuable reference-point, and action designed to influence the recipient's behaviour in such a way that he/she will use these aptitudes and knowledge, are the major advantages to be gained from mass media education. To strike a balance among the components calls for great familiarity with the communication process. The net result of the education imparted is, for the recipient, greater independence and more pleasure.

This aspect of the curriculum should be extended throughout the school - which raises problems quite different from experiments with pilot classes. Teacher training, and the evaluation of the syllabus in the short and long term, are therefore essential.



4. "Mass media education in the schools of Europe",
by Pierre LESPINE

Foreword

What we know about mass media education in primary school does not amount to much. Unfortunately, the reason seems to be lack of means rather than ignorance. Our seminar will bring new elements that may serve to strengthen the preliminary analyses.

The thinking and information in our possession result from contacts with international currents of educational innovation, which have regularly performed important servicesto schools since the beginning of the century.

The difficulty of defining an approach to the whole question of media education at European schools is borne out by the many reports and statistics already published on the subject.

The striking feature is much more the heterogeneous, not to say heteroclite, character of the experiments conducted, than even the faintest shadow of agreement. Fears are often expressed lest we be left behind by new technologies, or that the latter will place children in moral and/or political danger, though stress is also laid on the undoubted advantages presented by better use of the media as an aid to learning. Also, the often haphazard or sporadic nature of ministerial policies in many countries and the contrast presented by innovators, individually or in groups, who have succeeded in actively integrating the media in their instruction - all this rounds off a picture that might well lead to a pessimistic conclusion, if too much importance is attached to the school in regard to the cultural training of the individual.

And yet the question of including the media in the learning process from earliest childhood has been raised since the beginning of the century.

Following the startling pronouncement of a Strasbourg teacher at the end of the 1970s, that "television has now invaded every home", there has since grown up a glimmering consciousness that perhaps children are not quite so manipulable, fragile or malleable as educators thought until only a few years ago.

Whilst there is no longer an urge to wage war on the Goldoraks of comic strips or television, education in Europe is today faced by other challenges.

The new media - informatics and telematics - continue to raise the same basic questions, and may provide an opportunity for adopting a more lucid approach aimed at new practices, by clarifying the challenges of industry and society.

The few experiments which we shall take as illustrations are not in any sense claimed to be exhaustive. Much more systematic research would be needed before defining the bases of a full enquiry.

Be that as it may, it is clear that the whole question of mass media education for children of pre-elementary and elementary-school age immediately raises certain fundamental questions about our impressions of the young.

It would be interesting to link our reflections to the analyses now being made of the new contours of children's intelligence. These are best understood through an emirical, pragmatic, professional approach - the same as that adopted by the media themselves towards this whole education question - whilst endeavouring to accept children for what they are. But such an approach is not incompatible - far from it, indeed - with our holding more ambitious views.

Minimal agreement could perhaps be reached on the notion of a right to information. Attitudes here will vary widely, depending on whether this right is recognised and is the subject of specific work with each child; we must also face the fact that all over Europe, whether we like it or not, children spend a great deal of time before the television screen.

The aim is thus to reconstruct a coherent attitude, different it is true, from the essentially European current of new education in the early part of the century, but broadly resembling it in spirit.

i. The convictions held by the "new education" movement in the 20s

This trend, which united innovators in most countries of Europe and other continents, led to their tackling with great confidence the new means of communication represented at the start of the century by sound broadcasting and the cinema, after their earlier recognition of the printing-press and the school newspaper.

It is worth dwelling on this point, since, contrary to the dominant philosophy of the "bulge years" of the 60s, it was expected of these new media that they would make an important contribution from the very beginning of the primary-school period, which, it should be remembered, was to remain the mass education vehicle right up to World War II.

It was a French primary-school teacher, Célestin FREINET, who showed the way by means of his now famous educational techniques, already being modestly practised at that time in a few schools; it was by his efforts that they became systematised to a degree never before attained, in what may rightly be termed a veritable teaching theory of communication. The scene was thus set for ambitious pedagogical work whose aim was to make all the great media of the period an integral part of primary-school curricula (cf. an article published in "Pour l'ère nouvelle", Feb. 1934).

Underlying these educational principles are certain key ideas:

- the need for experimentation - children, like adults, will master only those techniques which they have themselves tested out;
- the proper place for such experimentation is in the framework of work that is socially and culturally useful;
- the experiments, and the work that encloses them, also include organisation of responsibilities reflecting current practises and thinking on the factory, Taylorism, co-operatives, etc.

What today is called "mass media education" then took its place in overall educational theory. Thus the printed word, the newspaper, the cinema, the radio, the first tape-recorders were real tools for learning because they were also tools for real work.

This experiment, albeit old,

- clearly defines teaching in the use of the media for 6 to 12 year olds,

- gives coherent form to utilisation of the means of communication, a virtue which today we have mostly lost,

- enables a teacher to specialise in these fields by avoiding a mixture of different approaches which was much in evidence during the 70s, for example.

ii. Present-day experiments

The institution of mass schooling and the raising of the leaving age after the "scholastic explosion" of the early 60s were not, unfortunately, translated into the thoroughgoing renovation of which the Geneva school and the pre-war educational thinkers had dreamed.

Nevertheless, the innovations of the preceding era are far from lost and resource centres, audio-visual among others, are being set up in France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and Northern Europe. These centres are linked with training policies and to some extent provide financial aid. It must be said, though, that they are often the first victims of budget cuts and the dominant impression is that between the official programmes and the translation of the new techniques into reality a great gulf often yawns.

On the whole, the primary school is rarely concerned.

In spite of everything, the situation is paradoxical: inquiries are beginning to multiply in all the industrialised countries - primarily, of course, in Europe and the USA - on young people and television. In Japan, as in France and the United Kingdom ; they particularly show that young children - from their earliest years - often spend more time in front of a television screen than in school... Despite this finding and the first-rate quality of certain television educational programmes, eg in Switzerland, the United Kingdom or Sweden, serious efforts to work out a programme for mass media education are mainly directed at the secondary school.

What comes out clearly from experiments concerning the media is that almost everywhere the poor relation is the desire for cultural compensation on which Finland, for example, lays great stress.

This desire seldom escapes the trammels of what I may term the logic of overprotection of the child, sometimes coupled with the idea of protecting the poor from themselves - the more so as, in Northern and Southern Europe alike, television has become almost the only instrument of information for the most underprivileged sectors of the population.

This phenomenon is strengthened by the conclusions of an analysis that is gaining ground in countries like France, to the effect that the bodies traditionally responsible for recruiting the appropriate staff now recruit none at all ... The persons concerned are out in the jungle and the jungle is television.

- Apart from the desire for compensation, the teachers often complain about unfair competition. They often succeed - involuntarily, it must be hoped - in making a course on the media just as boring as traditional lessons. In many cases they even manage to invent educational television that is just as off-putting as school. It is enough to cause a rush to switch on Goldorak or, more recently, Dallas.

In countries where education in the media is becoming obligatory, such as Austria and Norway, inter alia, there arise :

- problems of training. Consistency demands that the teacher training colleges should give the lead. But specialised courses remain marginal, faced with the predominance of the "basic" disciplines;

- problems of teaching: how to do practical work with children on the subject of the media, when we note the efficiency shown in critical studies by the media themselves on how to capture an audience. The linguistic and semiological experiments now beginning in France in the wake of the review "Communication", or in Italy under the auspices of Umberto Eco, are resented as being no more than university jargon on how to approach the media.

This partial setback strengthens the hand of those who are proposing an approach to the problem that is both empirical and creative. The children themselves become journalists, script-writers, producers or comic-strip designers.

The importance of this trend, which is on a very small scale, lies perhaps not so much in what is produced as in the close relationship often maintained with professionals of the audio-visual world, who, on the rebound as it were, get to know the children better and communicate with them more effectively.

An experiment conducted by Swedish television (1984) has attracted our interest for a number of reasons:

a. it is an international experiment with which the television services of Sweden, Finland, the United Kingdom (BBC) and the Netherlands are associated, as well as primary-school teachers and pupils;

b. the aim, through the medium of inter-class exchanges of parcels containing at the outset a certain amount of printing apparatus, an ordinary camera and a video camera, is to encourage exchanges of children from various countries and different social backgrounds, and in particular the children of migrants;

c. television professionals or newspapermen can help by putting their skills towards developing this exchange system and helping the children to solve the inevitable technical problems arising.

Several participants in this scheme found many advantages in it. But what we would stress once again is the importance of building bridges with the professionals, who also profit from such contacts. Innovators, who are somewhat tired of being alone, may find fresh reasons for their determination, even if their work sometimes departs from the straight course of immediate generalisation.

Since the beginning of the 1980's, the technologies linked to informatics and telematics have acquired considerable importance in European education systems. We seem to be witnessing a turning-point in policies at State level, as contrasted with what happened in the case of television and video. These technologies are taking over the standard mass media and becoming mass media themselves.

Aided and abetted by economic pressures, the relation between the objectives of industry and those of informatics is now much more clearly displayed. Several European countries, such as France, Denmark and the United Kingdom, have seen in the use of systems proper to their own case, an opportunity for industry to combat Japanese material. In France, this has led to large-scale and extremely ambitious computerisation plans. Possibly, this growing awareness has also served to speed up educational, social and cultural definitions of the new technologies.

Here, too, several schools of thought are possible:

- the child and the computer: many adults are perturbed by what is regarded as the excessive intimacy growing up between the child and the computer; the works of Seymour PEPPERT and the World Informatics Centre confirmed this at a very early stage and to a large extent independently of social origins. Clearly, we should seek to know more, in our own interests, about the vast expanse of social work that goes on permanently, underground and unseen, within the fabric of our societies;

- the dangers of informatics complete the array of fears expressed in connection with all the new technologies.

But - and this is a new element - the decision to use computers in primary school has sparked off less discussion than did the introduction of the press. One of the happier features of these technologies is that, paradoxically, they tend in some respects to reassure the teacher, because a computer screen may also resemble a textbook and communication is thus established in printed form and raises fewer problems of teaching than does the treatment of the fleeting image.

To round off this theme, we would note that observation of a number of international seminars, each time bringing together primary-school teachers from ten or more European countries, shows that the logical approach, dear to the hearts of so many educational pioneers, of active children and their interaction with the other parties involved, becomes more easily acceptable thanks to hand-in-glove co-operation with the engineers and constructors of material.

With this example, I shall conclude my remarks. It is by no means a bad thing that these new media should ultimately lead to a more critical spirit, to greater democracy, if these are values which for all of us are fundamental. Our daily work is not useless; far from it.

An enquiry made in 1983 in France by GEDREM on the child in front of the television screen showed that even the youngest had learnt how to invent self-defence mechanisms - antidotes, as it were, to many of the real dangers of television.

Although mass media education from earliest childhood is conducted with the idea of compensation in mind, this term is not meant in the normally accepted sense. In my view, it means that the aim is basically not to compensate, through the school, what the media are held to be deforming or concealing : it is just as important to accept the notion that the media, even in the midst of the worst cultural forms they perpetrate, play a very positive part in the cultural mechanisms proper both to the popular element and to society as a whole. I shall end by recommending that we should all read a very fine work of English sociology, "The uses of literacy" by HOGGART who, referring to the "photographed novels" that constitute the "poor man's media", largely gives the lie to any too sweeping view of the so-called "underprivileged" classes.

III. REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS

GROUP I

Chairman: Mr John PEETERS

Rapporteurs: Ms Jocelyne MATHIEU
Ms Roberte FRIANT

Countries represented: Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Iceland, Italy, Spain

I. What are the aims of mass media education?

General and long-term objective:

To enable the child to become a free citizen, a useful member of society and an informed consumer.

Specific objectives:

a. to be capable of handling the mass media "instrument" for the purpose of communication;

b. to interpret the messages delivered by the means of communication and recognise the jargon peculiar to the media;

c. to develop in children all those faculties which will awaken their critical sense;

d. to render them capable of producing messages through the mass media;

e. to teach them how to analyse messages and profit by them.

II. What position should be awarded to media education among the school's activities?

It is not a specific subject, but one which has a place in all disciplines.

As part of the business of learning how to communicate, the mass media are indispensable. They can be properly fitted into activities such as language training, artistic and bodily expression, technology, civics ...

III. What are the teaching activities whereby pupils can be made aware of the functioning of the media?

On the basis of examples given at the plenary sitting, each of us can find the outline of a reply.

To complete our ideas, further seminars need to be planned.

IV. What help has been given to date by professionals of the media towards this aspect of education?

In general, journalists have access to the elementary school. Many local papers publish pages adapted to children's affairs. The articles appearing there are mostly written by professionals. Only a few papers agree to publish schoolchildren's productions.

Local radio stations are always available but seldom used.

It appears more difficult to approach the television networks. However, it would seem that visits to their studios are possible at all times. The official television services regularly produce school transmissions.

What recommendations can be made?

Better co-operation between professionals and teachers; mass-media broadcasts should take place in collaboration with the teachers and if possible involve the children too.

V. How can pluralism be respected in mass media education for 5 to 12 year olds?

We have defined pluralism as follows:

"To respect the child as somebody who has had personal experience, teach him/her in turn respect for other points of view, and exercise an educational approach that is both compensatory and emancipating." We must give thought to the values imparted.

VI. What are the necessary conditions for introducing and developing media education at primary school?

Material conditions

Every school must have the following items available: cameras, portable tape-recorder, projectors, screen, stereo installation, wiring for sound, printing-shop, photocopier, thermocopier, dark room, media library, cine camera, duplicator, overhead Projector and epidiascope. All apparatus should be of high quality.

Syllabi

This is not a new subject and hence syllabi are not found to be necessary, but official support must be given to the importance of mass media education.

Teacher training

Initial and in-service training should take place during school hours. The teachers must be motivated.

Teachers have little information about the current state of research at national level.

Sensitisation of parents and their collaboration with the school

Parents must be encouraged to take responsibilities in this matter, and be able to talk with their children about what they receive from the mass media.

GROUP II

Chairman: Ms Maria Neves ALVAREZ-ARECES

Rapporteur: Mr Michel Combet

Countries represented: Belgium, France, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway.

Place of the media in education

Curricula and official instructions in the countries represented are still too vague about the place of the media in primary schools: at best the media seem to be regarded more often than not as one means of teaching, alongside other more traditional forms.

Their use frequently results from the whim of convinced but isolated individuals and is pursued without proper continuity. The extent of this practice needs careful assessment, masked as it sometimes is by the success of innovatory and militant procedures,

The initial and further training of primary-school teachers allots to media education all too small a place, if indeed it is not wholly non-existent.

This being so, it seems to us important that :

- mass media education should be given a place in the primary school teachers' initial training course, which is alone in concerning the entire intake, and in further training;

- it should have a place in the primary school curriculum and should be made just as mandatory as other forms of learning. for it too is fundamental in character. not as an additional subject perhaps, but even more as an instrument of teaching and a "communication tool", mastery of which "is necessary to the child's development - since the child though born a citizen, becomes (thanks in particular to the school) an enlightened citizen";

- States should promote the formation, existence or development of structures - such as CLEMI or ICOM in France - which make it possible to set up effective networks between teachers;

- the collaboration of media professionals in such education should be made more effective in a number of countries;

- the legislation in force, eg. in regard to copyright, be redefined so as to facilitate teachers' work (problem of copying private productions, radio programmes, etc).

Our objectives

Mass media education seems to us to go beyond the mere use of the media as a prop for various activities. Children must be taught how to get to know them, to use them as communication tools, to be independent of them, so that when they become adults they will be their masters, keeping the capacity for choice and the freedom to make it.

If this result is to be reached, children must be able to decode the messages transmitted to us by the media.

Activities

Learning the ropes here takes several forms, which must complement one another if they are to be effective.

1. Manipulation/Reflection: we have to work with the media as they are, with their qualities and their defects; they will be used as supportive material, but at an early stage, in fact from the very first lessons, a continuous two-way process must be induced between utilisation and reflection, bearing on the specific nature of the media, and on the approach to be adopted. We must demonstrate the many-sided aspects of information in a tolerant world. Our work should, of course, be adapted to the different ages of the children.

2. Production/Reflection: experimentation is doubtless the best road to understanding how the media operate. Very early, at varying levels it is true, depending on the children's ages, experiment will inspire reflection on communication and its jargon, whereas it is difficult to teach communication per se. Experiment leads to exchanges with other children and especially with parents, whose support is necessary and who must be convinced of the usefulness of media education, just as they are convinced of the value of the basic disciplines.

3. Contacts with the economic, social and political realities of the media

By meetings with professionals, visits to broadcasting houses, analysis of suitably edited documents, etc.

It is essential in all cases to start from the interests and motivations of the children. Here, although the "educational" programmes of certain media provide a useful complement to information -a more entertaining means of teaching -mass media education will succeed only if the school takes them at their face-value. This is the strategy which we consider the most formative in nature: studying nation-wide television services, or newspapers,

as part of a given subject-teaching, is the only way of helping a child to understand the codes they use and ultimately master them. The proper course is thus integrated mass media teaching, taking into account:

- the particular aims of a discipline, as laid down in curricula and official instructions;

- the objectives of media education, ie the specific means it adopts for the treatment and diffusion of knowledge and the manner in which the recipients can make it their own through active reception, transferable to any other situation where programmes from the same source are received.

GROUP III

Chairman: Mr José Manuel TORRE ARCA

Rapporteur: Ms Marie-Pierre ESCOUBAS

Countries represented: Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden

Before any start was made on the group's terms of reference - to discuss mass media education for 5-6 and 11-12 year-old children - a question was raised which had to be solved from the outset, since the very existence of the desired discussion depended on its solution:

Is there not some threshold, some age-limit below which it would be illusory, or even fatal, to claim to educate the child, psychologically immature as he is, and lacking the necessary mental structures?

The question was further backed up by the following argument: children of 5 to 6 years old need something to hold onto, they need certainties if they are to feel secure. This implies that it is preferable, in school, to educate children only later in the means of communication with which they rub shoulders all the time outside school, sometimes from the age of 2, and with the greatest pleasure!

We were thus immediately faced with a paradox, but in the end we met on common ground as follows:

- teachers, in all honesty, have no right to impose their own choice: they have no right to decide that children are not yet ripe for mass media education, in the sense that they lack the emotional, psychological and physiological prerequisites about which scientifically not much is really known and which are perhaps very different from their own conception of them;

- as regards children's need for something to hold on to, their desire for certainties, we agreed that there is one certainty that they must at all costs acquire, namely that for one single and ephemeral reality there is a host of diverse possible representations which are not an exact reproduction of the entire reality and must not be confused with it.

The child's awareness of this fact is seen as fundamental and of necessity calls for mass media education.

What are the objectives?

First of all, learning how to communicate. Mass media education is a means of awakening the desire to communicate. It is precisely this desire which motivates the representation of reality by widely differing means (writing, fixed image, mobile image, speech). It is through the medium of situations (where there is genuine communication) that children are first led to glimpse the necessary part played by certain forms of "know-how" such as reading, writing and explicit oral expression which will thus appear to them as "techniques" that, if grasped, will increase their power over the world around them.

Secondly, the socialisation of children (and perhaps also of the school?) is an objective closely linked with the foregoing. Mass media education, by awakening the desire and the need for communication, can help children to progress beyond the egocentrism of infancy. The discovery of other modes of behaviour, existence, thought, places and persons will broaden their field of references, limited initally to their familiar surroundings. Apprehending certain events will give an opportunity of expressing their own views and of listening to, respecting and discussing those of others.

Mass media education must be understood in terms of exchanges, tolerance, shades of meaning, and law, and it is in that sense that it contributes to the child's civic education.

Lastly, media education entails knowledge of the media, of the way they work, their place in society, their specific social (and economic) function (to distract, tempt, educate, inform, convince, etc) and analysis of their respective codes, so that children becomes capable of receiving them with some degree of detachment; so that they may have glimmerings of how to criticise and evaluate them; so that they can measure and appreciate the content of what is transmitted to them; in short, so that they may have a certain mastery over what they are induced to see, to read, to hear. Thus children must be able to have their doubts about the representations shown - to know that they are merely fragments of reality which have been "filtered".

Here we would observe that in school - indeed in society generally - the sources and infrastructures of information are not all questioned to the same extent. A printed text or a book is much more credible than an image or a sound (why?) - Perhaps some educational work on this point is required.

Place of Mass media education

Everyone agrees that this form of education must not constitute a new discipline. It is the subject of a two-fold approach:

- the mass media as an object of study;

- the mass media as educational auxiliaries.

Surely eager teachers must be free to divide the hours of school as they think fit. Constant use of the media as educational tools seems to us a healthy way of arriving at a rewarding interdisciplinary practice. As for times set aside for studying the media as such, they should, we feel, be more occasional in nature.

It is our view, therefore, that setting up mass media education as a new discipline would run the risk, by isolating and making it compulsory, of endowing it with a traditionalist character incompatible with the objectives we have outlined.

What educational activities are likely to awaken the children's awareness of the operation of media 3 and 4?

In what respects does production make possible a better mastery of the media?

Whilst there must be no wish to defer media education until the children are older, certain methodological precautions must nonetheless be taken, ie action must be progressive so as to take account of children's motivations, their capacity for abstract thought and their need for action to build up their stock of knowledge.

We thus feel that from the age of 5 the two approaches to mass media education should go hand in hand.

All are agreed on one premise: the classroom and its surrounds must be richly equipped, so that the child can at any moment handle various sources of information (images, photographs, slides, stills, works of art, etc, as well as textbooks, newspapers, magazines, a tape-recorder, etc).

1st type of activities noted

- Games and a sensory approach to the media: these are needed with the youngest children (which does not rule out the use of games for the older ones).

We consider sensory approaches like these to be wholly suited to initial contacts with the press, which are not spontaneously made by the child (in contrast to television, for example).

It is also desirable that children should play games with their own image (using mirrors, photographs, pictures or video).

2nd type of activities

These we classify as reading of images or information material in general, which involves more than "reading" in the accepted sense. The aim is to develop in the child an aptitude for sensing indications, expressing hypothetical situations and attaching meanings to information furnished. Meanings will not necessarily be "put into words", but may be expressed in various ways:

- through drawings: expounding the image presented by means of a pictorial representation, which implies prior interpretation of the image;

- through mime (of the story represented by the image).

Similar action may be taken vis-à-vis the written press (eg by reconstituting the story of an event recorded over several days), without the child having necessarily a mastery of reading in the strict sense.

We would emphasise that "knowing how to read", in the scholastic meaning of the term, is not an essential preliminary to this kind of activity: the result is an interesting flexibility in its use, particularly with children who are doing badly in school.

Since the basic characteristic of the media is interaction, a 3rd type of activities must clearly be also envisaged, namely actual creation, which implies recourse to a specific technique. There are several reasons why this is necessary:

- firstly, creation allows demystification of the technique, which is not "magic" but simply a tool whose use must be mastered;

- secondly, it opens the way to discovering the limits of the technique, in that everything cannot be done all the time and children are consequently helped towards a better appreciation or assessment of what the media are suggesting to them;

- lastly, creation faces children with a real need to communicate, using unaccustomed language. He is in the position of a transmitting agent with a message to be passed on to a particular addressee.

If communication is to be established, they must consider the "readability" of their message and so must place themselves in the addressee's position and exercise a "feed-back" to ensure that the message corresponds with what they are trying to say.

What help has so far been given by media professionals to this form of education?

The situation seems to be practically identical in the various countries represented. All of them possess establishments akin to our CNDP, manned by teachers and semi-professionals from the media, sometimes even by professionals (Norway), whose role is often limited, alas!, to loans of audio-visual material and fails to include any intervention by competent persons in the creative field.

All this raises the problem of the training of teachers in mass media questions.

Except for Portugal (pilot experiments over the last 10 years), Spain (Mercury Programme 1984), France (CLEMI, 1983) and the Netherlands where ministerial programmes for the training of teachers in mass media problems have been started, it is found that in all the other countries the mass media are restricted to the audio-visual domain, at least so far as teacher-training is concerned.

Elsewhere, private associations of journalists (and newspapers) have been launched to develop the use of the press in schools.

What can we recommend?

All are agreed on the positive effects resulting from the existence of such private bodies, inasmuch as they facilitate the educational projects advocated by teachers, and it is generally hoped that they will be further developed.

Some reticence is expressed about public institutions. A number of members say that they favour any private or public initiative that will tend to improve education in the mass media in schools.

Due to lack of time, items 6 and 7 were not discussed. However, one member of the group disputed the order of the themes proposed for debate. He was somewhat astonished to see that "briefing and collaboration of parents" formed part of item 7, whereas in his view that was a major objective of mass media education.

We agree with him that co-operation and dialogue with the parents is a desirable aim. When one thinks of children's aptitude for imitation, a form of behaviour that is part of the growing-up process, it cannot be denied that the attitude of their parents to the media will influence their own approach. Advantage can certainly be taken of this state of affairs, provided, of course, that parents are made aware of the purposes of mass media education. An experiment conducted in the Netherlands shows, however, that such sensitisation is not necessarily a pre-condition - it may also be the result of the child's mass media education itself and it is thus that genuine communication is established (example drawn from Dutch experiments: children invited their parents to see the work they had been doing on the press - and the parents learnt quite a lot!).

IV. CONCLUSION

Should children be initiated into the media as early as primary school? What activities should, at that stage, be given priority?

Even before any reflection was given to mass media education during primary schooling, the whole question as to whether it should be introduced at all was raised:

- is it not premature to give small children instruction on the information process? Is there not a danger of making confusion worse instead of teaching children how to marshal their thoughts?

- yet there is little doubt that, educationally, such instruction is legitimate: it is the school's duty to take account of the environment and to welcome children's questions. The atmosphere of our societies is suffused with messages of all kinds; they are not addressed to the children but the children nevertheless receive them. Hence the children must be taught how to find their way, how to acquire a certain detachment from all these multifarious stimuli.

One of our women members observed:

"I have watched the behaviour of children in their games and the attitudes they adopt. Their spontaneous play is often the reflection of what is transmitted by television, both as models and as fears".

Another member went on:

"You learn by asking questions and trying to find the answers. The media are amongst the subjects which the children ask about".

It is for us to reply.

- To recognise the languages and codes used by the media so as to be able to interpret their messages is, then, an educational enterprise which, in the long run, is an initiation in citizenship. The teaching must have regard to the children's ages, and, for the youngest, to the very vaguely defined frontier between the imaginary and the real. In this sense, learning about the communication process makes it possible to go beyond certain stages of thought, discovering other modes of behaviour and beginning children's socialisation by helping them to discover the world.

- But education in this form cannot dispense with some understanding of the "inside story". Hence the importance of participation by media professionals - especially journalists - to facilitate knowledge of how the media work and what limits they must observe.

Although these objectives are often common to all the countries represented some of them are in very different situations, ranging from inclusion of mass media education in official curricula to no mention of it whatsoever. Among the comments made were the following:

"But these viewpoints and these basically different experiments have often opened up avenues of study which I had not so far contemplated." "International comparison is a source of innovation." "This has confirmed my conviction that media education is necessary and has often been neglected, particularly in primary schools."

That of course does not prevent isolated but convinced individuals from carrying out pioneering experiments in this field. But what a risk of failure there is!

"The media must be viewed as a whole, not as separate entities, as regards their content and infrastructure. It is hardly possible to give priority of attention to the one whilst criticising the other, even though their techniques differ and their impact too."

But, as one course member noted:

"Though all those taking part in the course recognise the importance of mass media education, they do not all look at it in the same way".

"For some, the media are dangerous competitors for the school. For others, they are highly efficient teaching and learning tools,

while certain members consider that they should primarily be viewed as instruments of communication."

So the attitude of teachers to the media varies, but "teachers must be taken as they are, and children also".

Otherwise, would all this training be effective?

Teachers often display considerable mistrust of the media. They feel themselves under attack from a disloyal enemy who, they believe, uses much more powerful and persuasive means. Rather than seek to protect themselves, they would do better to assess the value of the alleged adversary and get to know this adversary. The reserved approach adopted by some teachers may also be partly explained by the fact that they have had no specific training in media education.

If we want to give mass media education a satisfactory place in the primary school and enable it to reach the greatest possible number of children:

- it must form part of the initial and further training of the teachers so that they may be equipped with the tools for analysis and the essential motivation;

- its place in the curricula and activities of the primary school must systematically be given official blessing. That does not necessarily mean that it should become an additional discipline. Rather should it continuously form part of inter-disciplinary activities, for the media can be used as supportive material for a wide range of subjects;

- collaboration with media professionals should be generalised, going further than certain technical contributions;

- States or regions must encourage the creation of structures that will provide possibilities for teacher training and allow the setting-up of effective networks;

- exchanges (regional, national or international) must be developed in order to do away with isolation and lead to mutual enrichment.

Mass media education may follow several courses by instituting progressive action that will take account of the children's development or by considering the different stages as complementary aspects, eg:

- games of all kinds, sensory approaches or the building-up of hypotheses on the basis of joint work with the media themselves. In the latter case the media must be used as they are and especially as they are usually seen by the children in the family environment, so as to confer additional interest on this form of instruction.

- experiments, such as recourse to production by the pupils themselves, are indispensable as a means of demystification and of acquiring "inside" knowledge. Children will then do their own thinking about communication of this kind. Being themselves its source, they will use the same techniques as adults and so learn to master the messages transmitted.

- finally, it is essential that parents be considered as full-time partners in the education imparted, in order to avoid any hint of a "rejection syndrome" and also to benefit from the specific contribution they make.

The seminar's participants welcome the quality of the ideas exchanged in a field to which too little thought is generally accorded , whereas it is in fact vital to the very future of children's education. They therefore propose that work designed to soften up public opinion and deepen its impact should be pursued at European level.

ANNEXE I/APPENDIX I/ANHANG I

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